

A STATEMENT by the Football League's deputy general secretary saying that Wycombe Wanderers had withdrawn their application to join the League, has caused amazement in the town.

Speaking to the Bucks Free Press on Monday, Mr George Readle said:

Story by MICHAEL KNOX

"I was told about Wycombe's withdrawal on Thursday or Friday of last week."

He confirmed that it was Wycombe's decision to withdraw and not the League's. They came to inspect the Loakes Park facilities a fortnight ago.

Mr Readle was part of that three-man delegation and their views on whether the facilities were suitable have not yet been made known. Wycombe appear to have taken the decision themselves.

Confusion is heightened because all Wycombe's top officials are on a one week's

tour of Portugal with the team and have been out of contact, and so cannot tell their side of the story.

One committee man to have stayed at home is reserve team secretary Denis Hobbs. He said: "It's news to me. I don't know anything about it."

"Nothing was discussed about the application at the last committee meeting. It is a matter for the chairman, vice-chairman and secretary."

Bemused

Manager Mike Keen was as bemused as anybody that the club should withdraw at the 11th hour. "I know nothing about it and can't really understand it," he commented.

Seeking clarification, I contacted the League on Wednesday, only to learn that Mr Readle was away for the next two days.

However, a spokesman there did confirm that Alliance League champions Altrincham were the only non-League club standing for election to the League's annual meeting on June 6, but could not say whether Wycombe's application had been withdrawn by the club.

It is little more than a month since Wycombe shocked the non-League football world by applying for Football League status — the first Isthmian League club ever to do so.

In some circles it was seen as a challenge to the Alliance League's apparent sole right to take such action. Wycombe proved it was possible for other clubs to apply.

The Football League said that Wycombe's application would be treated like any other club and in due course a delegation that included Sir Matt Busby, inspected the ground and had a friendly meeting with club officials.

A League spokesman confirmed yesterday morning that Wycombe had indeed withdrawn their application.

Wycombe won the first match of their tour when they beat Division One side Belenenses 2-1 on Tuesday thanks to a late goal by Terry Scott. Howard Kennedy scored the other goal from the penalty spot.

Blues aim to clear up the confusion

WYCOMBE Wanderers are to issue a statement later this week to clear up the position over their bid to join the Football League.

The League revealed last week that Wanderers had withdrawn their application,

but could not divulge the reasons for their decision.

As all Wycombe's top officials were touring Portugal with the team for a week, the position remained unclear.

Two significant members of the club, who had stayed in England were none the wiser, namely manager Mike Keen and reserve team secretary Denis Hobbs.

Club secretary John Goldsworthy said on Monday morning 12 hours after their return that the club would be issuing a statement this week clarifying the position. He declined to comment further.

Penalty

As far as the tour was concerned it proved a marvellous success as the Wanderers recorded victories over two leading clubs in the Portuguese League.

Last Tuesday they defeated Division One side Belenenses thanks to a late goal by Terry Scott. The margin of victory was 2-1, Wycombe's other goal being scored by Howard Kennedy from the penalty spot.

Then 48 hours later they had an excellent 3-0 success over Atletico Lisbon. The goals this time came from the veteran Ian Rundle, youngster Anton Vircaus and Steve Long.



STEVE LONG
... scorer